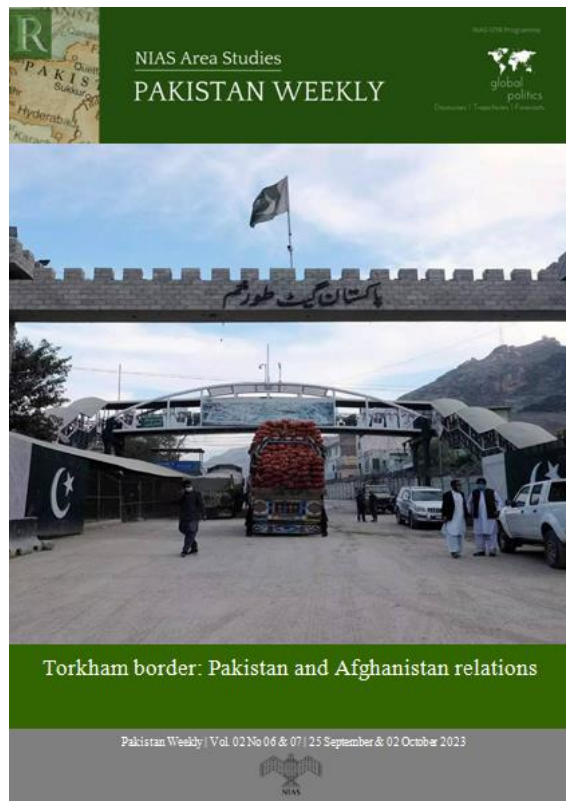


## Torkham border: Pakistan and Afghanistan relations

## Pakistan Weekly

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### About NIAS Global Politics

Global Politics is a primary focus of the NIAS Programme on Science, Technology, and International Relations (STIR). The primary focus is on contemporary world affairs. The Programme publishes *The World This Week*, and *NIAS Fortnightly on Science Technology and International Relations*.

#### *Editor*

D Suba Chandran

#### *Editorial Team*

Femy Francis, Dhriti Mukherjee, and Shamini Velayutham

### About NIAS Pakistan Reader

Pakistan Reader is an academic exercise at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) in the Indian Institute of Science Campus, Bangalore, India. The objective of its alert - "Pakistan Reader - Evening Brief" is to update the readers on contemporary developments within Pakistan, on a regular basis.

The PR Evening Briefs are a part of the focus on Pakistan at the International Strategic and Security Programme (ISSSP) within the NIAS.

## Torkham border: Pakistan and Afghanistan relations

By Shamini Velayutham

*Customs clearance agents, laborers, and members of local organizations held a protest demonstration. They said that the closing of the Torkham border was an economic murder of those involved in cross-border trade and other manual labor.*

On 08 September, thousands of civilians were trapped, and hundreds of trucks were unable to transfer commodities between Pakistan and Afghanistan due to the main border crossing still being closed. The crossings were shut down after a fight with Taliban forces. Thousands of civilians, largely Afghans, are waiting to enter the Torkham border as hundreds of cars, some carrying perishable goods like fruits and vegetables, wait on both sides of the border. This has caused a substantial amount of trade between the two countries to cease. On 15 September, after talks, the border was eventually opened for trade and other purposes.

### What happened?

On 06 September, Border security personnel from the two countries exchanged a lot of firing at one another's positions as Afghan officials started building a security post near to Pakistan's side of the border. The establishment of a new security station so close to the border crossing, according to Pakistani officials, was deemed to be completely unnecessary and to be in violation of the agreement reached between the two countries regarding the requirement for mutual discussion and agreement before any such development could take place. The isolated northwest Pakistani district of Chitral, which borders eastern Afghanistan and is situated about 400 kilometers north of Torkham, has also seen clashes and violent clashes between Pakistan and the Islamist Taliban in Afghanistan as a result of a significant influx of Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants.

### How did Torkham border come into existence?

Throughout history, Afghan and Turkic caravans, as well as the marching armies of mighty empires, have used this region. Most of them were traveling to Northern India and stopping at Peshawar and Lahore along the way. Chandragupta Maurya, Hsüan-tsang, Jayapala, Al-Biruni, Ibn Battuta, Babur, Humayun, Nader Shah, Ahmad Shah Durrani, Zaman Shah Durrani, Dost Mohammad Khan, and Akbar Khan are a few of the prominent regional historical leaders who are thought to have gone through Torkham.

### Why is Torkham important?

The road, which connects Peshawar in northwest Pakistan to Jalalabad, the largest city in Nangarhar, and the path further to Kabul, is a vital lifeline for

landlocked Afghanistan. The port city of Karachi in the province of Sindh transports products to Torkham. Five kilometers (3.1 miles) west of Torkham is the Khyber Pass summit. It is located alongside a vital supply route for the US-led NATO forces in Afghanistan. Over the past 20 years, tensions or political disputes have caused Torkham and other border crossings between the two nations to be frequently blocked. Most of Islamabad's more than 2,500 km border with Afghanistan has been walled.

### Repercussions of the closure

The joint chamber of commerce and industry of Pakistan and Afghanistan's director, Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, stated that "the border closure was causing huge losses to traders and common people of the two neighboring countries." Against the protracted closure of the Torkham border, political activists, transporters, traders, customs clearance agents, laborers, and members of local organizations held a protest demonstration. They said that the closing of the Torkham border was an economic murder of those involved in cross-border trade and other manual labor. Additionally, protesters issued a warning that if the border crossing was not reopened within two days, an indefinite protest sit-in will be held at the Zero Point. The closing of the Torkham gate was partly a result of the uptick in cross-border attacks against Pakistan by militant's hostile to Pakistan who were hiding in Afghanistan. The border was closed for a week, which resulted in significant financial losses for the transport and trading industries on both sides of the border and the loss of employment for hundreds of low-wage workers and day laborers.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch stated that leaders and fighters of the banned Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP, operating out of Afghan soil. TTP is listed as a global terrorist organization by the United States and the United Nations. It is a known offshoot and close ally of the Afghan Taliban. "These elements are enjoying sanctuaries inside Afghanistan, as confirmed by the U.N. Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the Security Council in its most recent report," she stated. According to the cited U.N. report, TTP has been "gaining momentum in its operations against Pakistan and aspires to regain control of territory within the



country." It was stated that there are at least 4,000 TTP members working on Afghan territory, and if the organization maintains a safe base in Afghanistan, it might pose a threat to the entire region. The Afghan Taliban, however, insist that they do not permit the TTP to wage terror against Pakistan or other nations from Afghan territory, saying that Pakistan should handle its own internal issues. The Pakistani border shutdown is unlawful and violates all agreements made in accordance with customary international law and norms, according to the Taliban-led foreign ministry of Afghanistan. They also charged Pakistan for keeping Afghanistan's cargo in the Karachi port.

Opening of Torkham border

On 15 September, following a firefight between the security forces of the two nations, a crucial border crossing between Pakistan and Afghanistan has reopened to both pedestrian and vehicular traffic after being shut down for nine days. An official in the Khyber district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where the Torkham border crossing is situated, Muhammad Anas, confirmed that immigration and customs officials had arrived and were carrying out their regular duties, and that both foot and vehicle traffic had been permitted to pass. The primary border crossing between the two countries, through which hundreds of people and vehicles pass daily, has officially opened, according to Afghan officials in Nangarhar province on the other side of the border.

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Source: Reuters



Source: Dawn

## PR Short Note

### Justice Isa: Beginning of a New Era?

By Shamini Velayutham



Source: Facebook/National Assembly of Pakistan

On 18 September, The Supreme Court (Practice & Procedure) Act 2023, suspension of enforcement was implicitly overturned by the newly sworn in Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa, who also ordered a live stream of the entire hearing by the full court bench consisting of all 15 judges. The fact that all private TV stations broadcasted the case was a first in the nation's legal history. Following the hearing, CJP Isa stated his intention to uphold transparency and accountability, stating that he does not desire such powers that would render him not liable. Additionally, he remarked that while he disliked some laws the sanctity of the legislation and the parliament must be respected.

#### How is Pakistan responding to Justice Isa?

An editorial in Dawn “The Isa epoch,” President Arif Alvi, who had earlier filed a referral against the Supreme Court judge due to alleged wrongdoing and non-disclosure of assets, administered the oath himself, which added to the event's ironic optics. It was a historic moment that communicated “a clear message of steadfastness” because the new chief justice's wife was standing by his side, according to one participant. The ceremony was telecasted live where the op-ed states it as a positive beginning and an indication that Chief Justice Isa is eager to forge a route firmly grounded in jurisprudential integrity rather than the shifting sands of populism that ruined his predecessor's term.

Similarly, an opinion in The News International “The Age of The Qazi,” expressed that CJP is the oldest among the republic's senior wisemen and hence there is no place for retaliation, hinting at the previous allegations against him and his family. The writer stresses that he must essentially conduct himself in a manner, as though there had never been any attempt to harm. The significance of his position should not be determined by the stature of

who came before him but rather by the values and the aspiration of Pakistan's founders and its defenders, attorneys, constitutionalists, and judges. CJP Isa is responsible to sustain harmony inside the Supreme Court of Pakistan by elevating the judiciary as an institution above himself.

Finally, an editorial in The Express Tribune “Televised full court,” looked into the live telecast of the full court hearing against the Practices and Procedure Act. The writer applauded the Supreme Court's ability to participate in various conflicting discourses as well as block any attempts by the parliament to meddle in the business of the superior courts. It is a tremendous consolation that the judiciary has secured itself a promising role in the public domain by the landmark decision.

Legal experts have applauded the Supreme Court's decision to broadcast its deliberations live on television, but they have also cautioned that the decision does have some setbacks. Lawyer Abdul Moiz Jaferii stated that the live streaming of court proceedings “is a brilliant start and the fulfilment of a long-standing position of CJ Isa which had come through during his petition against the reference against him. The majority had at the time decided that matters of fundamental importance ought to be televised, but that the modalities were to be decided by the administrative side of the Supreme Court, which never met on the issue. On 18 September the full court met on the administrative side before this hearing and perhaps the same premise was decided upon which allowed the televising to be possible”.

Supreme Court advocate Basil Nabi Malik also lauded the Chief Justice for the “step towards greater transparency” but cautioned that “greater transparency should not be confused with greater publicity. Every judge must cater to the ends of justice without any care or consideration for any broadcast or lack thereof. Furthermore, every judge must be cautious not to get carried away with the access (the court) now enjoys with a greater audience, and in having such access, it must ensure it does not pander to the sentiments of the general populace more so than the facts of the case before it.” Lawyer Jahanzeb Sukhera calls the live streaming “an interesting experiment” and says it “gives the taxpayers an inside view of the functioning of the judicial branch and a clearer picture of proceedings”, he adds his cautionary advice to Malik's. Sukhera asserts that there are various concerns to consider, one of which “is that this may cause more camera induced grandstanding from both the bar and the bench. Instead of arguments and observations being limited to the

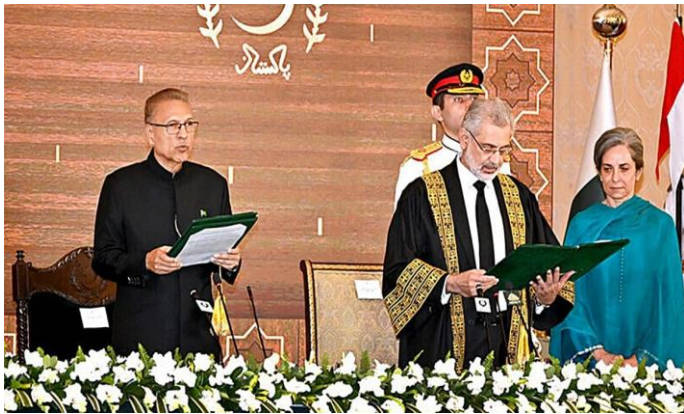
extent necessary to decide a matter, we may slip into unnecessary theatrics. It may also increase the possibility of more judgments being rendered on the consideration of public perception.”

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Source: X/AlQarni



## PR Short Note

### On Climate Change, where is Pakistan currently? Where does Pakistan want to go? And how does Pakistan get there?

By Dhriti Mukherjee



Source: Associated Press

On 21 September, Ali Tauqeer Sheikh wrote an editorial in *Dawn*, titled “Climate action leadership,” where he discussed the climate challenges that Pakistan faces ahead of the COP28 summit in November 2023. In the background of Pakistan’s recent role as the chair of the G77+China at the last climate summit, the country is at a point where it must address climate challenges by increasing momentum in its efforts. Sheikh emphasised the significance of addressing four fundamental challenges: political and macroeconomic stability, institutional and policy reforms, climate finance architecture, and climate-smart actions at the provincial level. Focusing on this could bolster Pakistan’s “climate-resilient and low-carbon development journey.” In line with this, he raised three central questions.

#### Where is Pakistan currently?

The Global Stock-take (GST), conducted under Article 12 of the Paris Agreement, provided a comprehensive assessment of global climate efforts through 13 findings, centring around “mitigation”, “adaptation”, and “implementation.” While some positive achievements can be acknowledged, the author brought to light how “no discourse has taken place on the implications of the overshoot for Pakistan.” The GST’s conclusion that global commitments fall short of limiting global warming to 1.5°C highlights the urgency of more robust climate action.

#### Where does Pakistan want to go?

With 2030 as a pivotal year for climate stabilisation and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation, Pakistan’s climate narrative must align with these global goals. The decisions made at COP28 will shape Pakistan’s future sectoral policies at both national and provincial levels. A well-thought-out response to the GST findings will determine international interest and support in bridging financial and investment gaps. Pakistan aspires to become a global leader in climate resilience and sustainability; thus, a strategic and comprehensive response to the findings of the GST is paramount.

#### How does Pakistan get there?

The editorial highlights a critical concern: the recent rise in global temperatures exceeding the 1.5°C threshold. Based on the recommendations of a report by the Overshoot Commission, this rise indicated the need for “accelerating emission reductions, more resources to adapt to climate impact, and scaling up CCS technologies.” The GST findings highlighted the complex relationship between climate and development, which are vital for Pakistan as it moves towards prioritising the “National Adaptation Plan (NAP), NDC, and climate policies” in its provinces.

Aside from this, the author also brought out the fact that global attention during the COP28 summit will be on “devastation caused by dam outbursts in Libya and the earthquake in Morocco.” The 2022 floods in Pakistan are not likely to “evoke emotional support,” and keeping this in mind, Pakistan must bring forth steps that it took as part of climate action. This includes conducting a Climate Change Council meeting for COP28 like the outgoing government had done for COP27, developing the provincial roadmaps for NAP implementation, “climate finance architecture and cataloguing climate actions on the ground.” These steps will carve the path for Pakistan in its “climate-smart development.”

## PR Daily Briefs

### POLITICS



Source: AFP

#### **FIA advises against public hearing of Imran Khan**

On 2 October, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) expressed its concerns and advised the Islamabad High Court (IHC) not to hold a public hearing of PTI Chairman Imran Khan. Stating their worry that it might sever ties with other countries, FIA Special Prosecutor Shah Khawar said that they cannot have a public hearing under the Official Secrets Act and that it will affect their diplomatic ties. PTI lawyer Salman Safdar opposed the plea by FIA and that they contended before to have an in-camera hearing. (Awais Yousafzai, [“Cipher case: Open court trial may harm Pakistan’s ties with other states, FIA tell IHC,”](#) *The News International*, 2 October 2023)

#### **JI on the hiked gas rates**

On 1 October, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Chief Sirajul Haq pointed out that while the current interim government reduced the prices of petroleum, they also hiked prices for gas. He added: “From the president and prime minister to police, everyone is admitting that the situation is terrible, but no one is accepting the responsibility for it.” He highlighted that domestic LPG will cost PKR 3,080 and commercial LPG will cost PKR 11,849. He proclaimed that only his party could break the beggar bowl situation of Pakistan and put the country towards the path of development. ([“Govt cut fuel prices, but upped gas rate: Siraj,”](#) *The Express Tribune*, 2 October 2023)

#### **Kakar stress the law “to take its course” for Nawaz’s return**

On 29 September, Pakistan’s Interim Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq, stated that he wanted the law “to take its course” when PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif returned to Pakistan. He also added that the interim administration has gotten in touch with the law ministry to decide for the Nawaz

Sharif’s arrival. The interim prime minister stated in a recent interview with BBC Urdu that “we have asked the law ministry as to what should be the caretaker government’s position in terms of administrative measure on Nawaz’s return as soon as I reach the country, we will call a meeting in that regard.” The PML-N leader was granted a reprieve by the judiciary, allowing him to leave the country, therefore PM Kakar added that the courts would decide whether to arrest the former prime minister. “The courts, not the executive, had granted permission for a guilty person to leave. This is a matter for the courts, not the executive branch, he concluded. ([“PM Kakar wants ‘law to take its course’ on Nawaz’s return to Pakistan,”](#) *Dawn*, 29 September 2023; [“Will not be in govt’s control if Imran legally barred from polls: PM Kakar,”](#) *Business Recorder*, 29 September 2023)

#### **Interim CM of Sindh Issues Order for Sakrand Killings Probe**

On 29 September, Sindh’s Interim Chief Minister Maqbool Baqir, ordered a thorough investigation into an alleged event that occurred in Sakrand Taluka of Nawabshah district that led to the death of four villagers in a gunfight with a security personnel. The incident happened on 28 September when strong contingents of Sindh Police, joined by the paramilitary Rangers, attacked the Mari Jalbani village near Sakrand town in pursuit of militants affiliated with the illegal Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army. According to the local police, they were informed about a college student who was reportedly involved in some illicit activities and had taken refuge there. (Kamran Khamiso Khowaja, [“Sindh Caretaker CM Orders Probe Into Sakrand Killings,”](#) *The Friday Times*, 29 September 2023)

#### **Interim Government to secure USD 700 million for standby agreement of the IMF**

On 29 September, the *Business Recorder* reported on the Interim government’s plans to deliver the International Monetary Funds, USD700 million standby agreement. Saleem Mandviwalla presiding over the Senate Standing Committee on Finance assured that they are working to secure funding for multilateral organizations like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and others. She stated that they are here for the short term and that they want to ensure continuity. (Zaheer Abbasi, [“IMF programme: Govt will deliver to secure \\$700m](#)



under SBA: Shamshad,” Business Recorder, 29 September 2023)

### **JIT found over 900 accused of 9 May violence as guilty**

On 28 September, the Joint Investigating Team established to investigate the 9 May violence following the arrest of PTI Chairman Imran Khan have found over 900 leaders and party activities guilty of the serious offence. The DIG said: “We have declared them prime accused in 12 out of the total 14 cases registered under the anti-terrorism act and other charges at Lahore’s various police stations... [and] challans have been submitted in the ATC.” They further claimed that they have enough evidence to probe against Imran Khan and other PTI significant. (Asif Chaudhry, Wajih Ahmad Sheikh, “JITs find Imran, over 900 others ‘guilty of serious offences’,” *Dawn*, 29 September 2023)

### **Approval rate survey of various state institutions**

On 28 September, *The News International* reported on a public opinion survey by Gallup on the approval rating of various media. The report found that Politicians stood at 39 per cent, Parliament at 47 per cent and the Election Commission of Pakistan at 42 per cent. The survey investigated the approval of the functions of various institutions where the army was at 88 per cent, police at 54 per cent and local government at 51 per cent. The survey was further divided into provinces over the army approval with Punjab at 90 per cent, Sindh at 88 per cent, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 91 per cent. On political leaders, Imran Khan scored the most with the highest rating of 60 per cent followed by Saad Rizvi and Pervaiz Elahi at 38 per cent. (Ansar Abbasi, “Military’s approval rating 88pc, politicians’ 39pc, parliament’s 47pc, media, judiciary 56pc,” *The News International*, 28 September 2023)

### **Petition filed with Supreme Court to uphold constitutional governance**

On 28 September, a petition was filed by Raja Muhammad Irshad a former additional general stating that the country was in a condition of anarchy owing to the lack of constitutional governance. The petitioner stated that the court was obligated to uphold governance and they cannot remain oblivious to the trampling of fundamental and citizen rights. Additionally, it demanded the mandate and the role of COAS in state and federal government be clarified and put an end to the controversy. It stated: “It is [a] very serious allegation against the army’s top brass and the premier intelligence agency for destabilising the

electd governments and manoeuvring the elections in the country.” (“SC urged to define army chief’s roie in statecraft,” *Dawn*, 28 September 2023)

### **CII demanded the establishment of a special court to hear cases like Jaranwala**

On 28 September, the Chairperson of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Dr Qibla Ayaz demanded the formulation of a special court to investigate and probe cases related to crimes like the Jaranwala incident. Qibla addressing the 234th CII special session said: “The public not to take the law into their own hands, because it would be contrary to the Quran, Sunnah, the Constitution and the established national norms.” He stressed that such actions negate the religious teaching but are politically motivated. (“CII demands special court to try Jaranwala culprits,” *The Express Tribune*, 28 September 2023)

### **Protests in Balochistan by BNP-M**

On 27 September, Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M) held protests over the tension in Wadh. The protestors stood outside Quetta Press Club headed by BNP-M’s Secretary General, Waja Jahanzeb Baloch and other party leaders. The protestors decried the government’s inactions against the armed force’s extrajudicial measures leading to the displacement of several families. They alleged that the province has been mitigated with unfair treatment and subjected to death squads leading to hiked tensions. (Saleem Shahid, Abdul Wahid Shahwani, “Protests across Balochistan over growing Wadh tensions,” *Dawn*, 28 September 2023)

### **PTI against PM Kakar’s statement on Imran Khan**

On 27 September, a PTI spokesperson expressed his disapproval of Interim Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar’s statement over the functioning and political future of the party as “irresponsible and worrisome.” The spokesperson linked the statements with the interim government’s role in unconstitutional political engineering in the country. He further stated that any move to remove Imran Khan from the ballot would be considered a criminal act and asked Kakar to not waste the country’s time by creating confusion. Furthermore, he highlighted that Kakar has no mandate or authority to exclude PTI and warned against the conspiracy meted out against them. (Syed Irfan Raza, “PTI slams PM Kakar’s remarks on Imran,” *Dawn*, 28 September 2023)

### **PM Kakar clarifies his statement on PTI chief and party contesting elections**

On 26 September, Interim Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar talking to Oxford Union clarified that Imran Khan's participation in the elections is not based on political contentions but will be according to the law. When inquired if Imran Khan doesn't receive a ballot, instigating protest PM Kakar said that peaceful protesting is a civilian right but the government would not tolerate violence or vandalism. Additionally, he felt that the PTI party contesting elections regardless of Imran Khan was misunderstood and that they do not hold any personal vendetta against any party. (Syed Irfan Raza, Atika Rehman, "No institution will favour one group or other in polls: PM Kakar." *Dawn*, 27 September 2023)

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### **Anchor Riaz is finally 'home' after 4 months**

On 25 September, Punjab Inspector General (IG) Dr Usman Anwar, Sialkot District Police Officer (DPO) Hassan Iqbal and Riaz's lawyer, Mian Ali Ashfaq confirmed that Imran Riaz Khan, a television host and YouTuber, had arrived home at last. Following the arrest of PTI Chairman Imran Khan on 9 May, violent protests erupted throughout the nation. He was taken into custody two days later. The Punjab police chief had been granted a "last chance" by the LHC on 20 September to trace Riaz by 26 September. LHC Chief Justice Muhammad Ameer Bhatti had said that his forbearance was "running out" throughout the hearing. The PTI leader Hammad Azhar claimed that Riaz's return had caused joy throughout the country. The PTI demanded the release of every political prisoner who was being held in "illegal incarceration". (Rana Bilal, "TV anchor Imran Riaz Khan 'safe at home after being missing for over 4 months." *Dawn*, 25 September 2023)

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### **PTI women leaders rearrested**

On 25 September, PTI leaders were rearrested after their release from Kot Lakhpat Jail. The Anti-Terrorism Court granted the release of the PTI party members accused of the 9 May violence with a surety bond of PKR 0.1 million. The rearrested include Sanam Javed, Afshan Tariq Asma Shuja and Shah Noor, probed under another case related to the Jinnah House violence. The accused have been incarcerated for the past four months and now are shifted again to the police station for further investigation. ("PTI women activists rearrested in Lahore soon after their release." *Dawn*, 26 September 2023)

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### **CJP Qazi Faez Isa on pending cases and adjournment of case for future**

On 25 September, the newly appointed Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Qazi Faez Isa announced during a court hearing that the practice of adjourning the case for later will not be accepted and that no one will have to wait for six to eight months for court orders. Justice Isa expressed his discontent with the number of cases that remain under the Supreme Court and ordered that notice should be issued in the first hearing and the arguments provided in the next. Justice Isa since his appointment has been changing the course of the court by bringing in live broadcasting of full court for accountability and limits on the powers of top judges. (Jahanzeb Abbasi, "CJ Isa signals an end to case adjournments." *The Express Tribune*, 26 September 2023)

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### **HRCP condemns PM Kakar's statement on PTI chairman and party**

On 25 September, the Human Rights Council of Pakistan (HRCP) condemned Interim Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar's statement on Imran Khan. He said that free and fair elections are possible even without the incarcerated PTI chairman Imran Khan and thousands of his supporters and party members behind bars facing or awaiting trial. HRCP chairperson Hina Jilani called the statement made by Kakar "ill-judged" and "anti-democratic" in light of the fact that the accused have not yet been found guilty. Additionally, she said that Kakar alone cannot decide as to what constitutes a "free" and "fair" election. HRCP called out the systemic attack against the PTI party and leadership by mass arrest, forced defections and the unfair treatment meted out to PTI leaders, especially Parvez Elahi. The commission urged the government from making "irresponsible, partisan statements on matters not within its mandate." ("HRCP Deems Interim PM Kakar's Statement On Imran Khan 'Anti-Democratic', 'Ill-Judged.'" *The Friday Times*, 25 September 2023)

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### **PML-N leader says NAB laws are 'destructive for Pakistan'**

On 24 September, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Malik Ahmed Khan who is arrived in London for a personal visit stated that he was unaware of the Interim Prime Minister's Anwaar ul- Haq Kakar arrival to London. He added that he did not conduct any meeting with Kakar. He further addressed the reporters by saying that he had several meetings with PML-N league delegations which included party supremo Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif. They discussed the Supreme Court's decision about the NAB law amendments.

At the prior meeting, it was acknowledged that the SC's decision regarding the NAB was basically not against political parties but rather against Pakistan. He apprised that no government employee is prepared to sign any paperwork with this NAB, businesspeople are not prepared to invest, and a hostile environment exists. He added that it is a black law. (Atika Rehman, "[PML-N terms NAB law 'destructive' for Pakistan](#)," *Dawn*, 25 September 2023)

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### **Kakar says elections can happen without Imran Khan**

On 24 September, in an interview with Associated Press Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar stated that 'fair elections' are possible even without PTI chairman Imran Khan who is currently detained in a graft case, and his party's leaders imprisoned after violent riots in the nation on 9 May. Kakar did add that thousands of PTI members "will be running the political process" and "will be participating in the elections," even though they were not involved in "illegal activities." He said that election preparations have already started in the country's major political parties. Meanwhile, the PTI declared that any elections without Imran would be "unacceptable, illegal, and unconstitutional" in a statement today. It was noted that the PTI was Pakistan's "largest" political party and Imran was the country's most well-liked leader. "The caretaker prime minister's statement is a manifestation of the insensitivity found in the state structure regarding the Constitution, democracy, and national interests," it said. ("[Fair' elections can take place without Imran, jailed PTI leaders: PM Kakar](#)," *Dawn*, 25 September 2023)

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### **Nawaz coming home to help people combat inflation says Maryam**

On 24 September, PMLN Senior Vice President and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz said that those who oppose the Constitution are alarmed by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's comeback. She made this statement while speaking at the consultative meeting of the PMLN's Azad Jammu and Kashmir branch when the plans for Nawaz Sharif's return were reviewed. According to the PMLN chief organizer, Nawaz Sharif is coming back home, to free the populace from inflation. The attendees of the conference shouted slogans in support of Maryam and Nawaz Sharif, claiming that their entrance would safeguard Kashmiris' and Pakistanis' interests. ("[Nawaz returning home to relieve people of inflation: Maryam](#)," *The News International*, 25 September 2023)

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### **Caretaker ministers seek bill payment in instalments to aid closed industrial units**

On 23 September, *Business Recorder* reported that Pakistan's Caretaker Minister for Commerce and Industry, Gohar Ijaz, proposed allowing closed industrial units to pay their outstanding electricity bills in ten equal instalments. This would include a ten per cent down payment, aiming to provide relief to these units and help revive the industry. The proposal comes at a time when around one million people across the country are unemployed due to the closure of industrial units. The move seeks to address the economic impact of unpaid bills on industrial sectors, such as textiles and defaulters by the government. (Mushtaq Ghumman, "[Closed industrial units: Minister advocates payment of power bills in instalments](#)," *Business Recorder*, 23 September 2023)

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### **Pakistan seeks release of USD 10 billion pledged by donors for flood recovery**

On 22 September, Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul- Haq Kakar emphasized the importance of unlocking USD 10 billion in pledged donations from around the world to aid the country's recovery from devastating floods. He stated that they were "trying to ensure that the amounts promised and pledged to us are dispersed to Pakistan and are spent on those affected by the floods." These funds represent over half of what Pakistan estimated it needed to rebound from the disaster. Kakar stressed that the allocated projects align with donor pledges and aim to provide tangible financial assistance to those affected by the floods. He expressed hope that their "development partners will accord priority to the allocation of funds," as the funding is vital for Pakistan's economic stability. However, concerns have arisen over its future debt obligations, leading to delays in an IMF bailout. ("[Pakistan pushing for \\$10b flood-relief fund disbursement](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 22 September 2023)

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### **Supreme court to resume its hearing on the Faizabad verdict**

On 22 September, the hearing of a number of review petitions filed against the Supreme Court's decision regarding the 2017 sit-in by Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) in Faizabad, in Islamabad, is scheduled to resume soon. The infamous judgment by Justice Isa before he took the oath of office as Chief Justice of Pakistan ordered defence ministry and the tri-services leaders to discipline individuals under their charge who were found to have broken the oath. On 28 September, a three-judge bench, led by Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Qazi Faez Isa, will hear review petitions.



The other two members of the bench are Justice Aminud Din Khan and Justice Athar Minallah. The Ministry of Defense, Intelligence Bureau, PTI, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, and Pemra all made arguments in favour of the petition. (Nasir Iqbal, [“SC to resume hearing on review pleas against Faizabad verdict,” Dawn, 22 September 2023](#))

### **PML-N leader Khawaja Asif suggests PIA to shut down**

On 22 September, PML-N leader Khawaja Asif, referred to Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) as a “sick organization” and recommended that the national airline should be shut down. While speaking to *DawnNewsTV*, he stated that “It should have been privatised 30 to 35 years ago. It’s a sick organisation that is haemorrhaging,”. Asif added that any new airlines that will replace the PIA should be run by the private sector rather than the government. Meanwhile, on 21 September, the Interim Minister for Privatization Fawad Hassan Fawad stated that no employee of any organization will be fired even if it is privatized, including the government’s greatest loss-making firm, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). He also stated that “The prime minister has instructed me that the PIA would not be grounded. We have already worked out a way to keep the PIA flying,” (Adil Shahzeb, [“A sick organisation’: Khawaja Asif suggests PIA be shut down, replaced by new airline,” Dawn, 22 September 2023](#); Shahbaz Rana, [“Govt won’t let PIA be grounded,” The Express Tribune, 22 September 2023](#))

### **Former PTI leader joins IPP as PTI's election future uncertain**

On 21 September, former National Assembly member and PTI women’s wing president, Munazza Hassan, joined the Istehkham-i-Pakistan Party (IPP), dealing another blow to PTI. Former PTI Chairman Jahangir Khan Tareen, stated: “It will be premature to say whether the PTI will be in elections or not.” Some PML-N leaders doubt PTI’s symbol will appear on ballot papers. Tareen asserted his eligibility to contest polls despite past disqualification. He expressed confidence in the January 2024 elections. Meanwhile, IPP remains focused on reshaping politics and the economy, while maintaining their “excellent relationship” with the Sharifs. (Zulqernain Tahir, [“With another wicket down, PTI fate hangs in balance: Tareen,” Dawn, 23 September 2023](#))

### **Shehbaz Sharif returns to the UK urgently**

On 21 September, *Dawn* reported that Shehbaz Sharif urgently returned to the UK only after landing in Pakistan for 48 hours. Shehbaz was in the UK for several weeks on the pretext of a health

check where he frequented meetings with PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif for his return to Pakistan. His visits will coincide with Maryam Nawaz’s visit to the UK and it is assumed that there will be a party huddle to discuss the smooth arrival of the supremo. In light of the reopening of his cases and the Supreme Court striking the amendments, Nawaz Sharif needs protective bail in the Chaudhry Sugar mill case and for that, he would need to surrender before the court in the Al-Azizia case. (Zulqernain Tahir and Atika Rehman, [“Shehbaz rushes back to London within 48 hours,” Dawn, 21 September 2023](#))

### **Imran Khan and the 9 May accused charged with “criminal conspiracy”**

On 20 September, Punjab Police filed “criminal conspiracy” against PTI chairman Imran Khan and other accused for the 9 May violence. It is estimated that 50 cases have been registered under anti-terrorism law in various police stations. Lahore SSP Dr Anooch Masood Chaudhry reported that police added offences like the 34 and 120b which state that any crime done by several individuals with a common intention will hold each person liable individually and that anyone accessory to the conspiracy will be probed in line with the punishment of the actual offence. Chaudhry informed that they are waiting for the final report from the Federal Investigation Agency and Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority regarding the 9 May incident. (Asif Chaudhry, [“Imran charged with criminal conspiracy over May 9 attacks,” Dawn, 21 September 2023](#))

### **Parvez Elahi back in Adiala jail**

On 19 September, PTI President Parvez Elahi was denied physical custody by the judicial bench under the Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) in two cases related to illicit nomination in Punjab Assembly and remanded him back to Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi. At the beginning of the hearing, Intezar Hussain, the president of the Lahore Bar Association, who was defending Elahi, claimed that Additional Prosecutor General Abdul Samad could not represent the ACE before the magistrate because the latter was only qualified to appear before the high and supreme courts and only the designated prosecutors of the anti-graft watchdog were qualified to argue the case. Elahi expressed his entire confidence in the military and courts during a brief interaction with media outside of court. He said that both of them were stewards of the nation’s security. Elahi blamed the Sharif family for Pakistan’s current predicament when discussing the nation’s economic difficulties. (Wajih Ahmad Sheikh, [“Elahi sent back to Adiala](#)

as ACE denied his remand,” *Dawn*, 20 September 2023)

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## PAKISTAN ELECTIONS 2023



Source: Dawn

### **Voting information can be changed by citizens until 25 October**

On 28 September, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) declared that voters over 18 can amend their voter information until 25 October. To allow registered voters to amend or correct their information, the commission has decided to "unfreeze" the electoral rolls, which are a formal list of eligible voters who reside in a specific constituency. The Elections Act of 2017 Section 39 caused the electoral records to be frozen on 20 July, according to ECP's Media Outreach and Coordination Wing. In the interest of data accuracy, the commission has now permitted residents to make corrections in the rolls. In Pakistan, there are now 127 million registered voters, up from 106 million at the time of the 2018 general elections, according to data released by the ECP last week. Statistics revealed that in the nation, where women make up 49 per cent of the population, the gap between men and women of voting age was almost 10 million. Since the 2018 elections, 11.74 million more female voters have been registered, reducing the difference. In contrast, 9.28 million more male voters have been registered to vote during the same time period. (Iftikhar A. Khan, "[Citizens allowed to amend voting information till Oct 25](#)," *Dawn*, 29 September 2023)

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### **ECP registers new parties**

On 25 September, three new political parties were registered by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) just before the process of hosting the upcoming general elections got underway. The commission has announced the registration of Khadmeen-i-Sindh (KS), Pakistan Kesan Labour Party (PKLP), and Tehreek-i-Ehsas Pakistan (TEP), according to notices posted on the ECP's official website. "In pursuance of sections 208 & 209 (3) of the Elections Act, 2017, read with sub-rule (2) of rule 158 of the Election Rules, thereof, the Election Commission of Pakistan is pleased to

publish for public information, the certificate containing the information with regard to the conduct of intra-party elections, the names, designations and addresses of the party office bearers and the details of the election," the ECP stated in a notification regarding the registration of the Khadmeen-i-Sindh party. (Syed Irfan Raza, "[ECP registers three new political parties](#)," *Dawn*, 25 September 2023)

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### **ECP faces criticism on poll dates**

On 22 September, a senior official stated that the announcement of the election dates is "not technically possible". He claimed that once an election date has been officially announced, a formal process that must adhere to certain deadlines will begin. The official elaborated on this reasoning by stating that Section 57 of the Elections Act requires that a polling date announcement be followed by the publication of an election timetable, which starts the electoral cycle. Additionally, PATTAN and Coalition38, a group of more than 150 civil society organizations and labour unions, released a joint statement criticizing the ECP's decision to make an incredibly ambiguous statement about the upcoming general elections, which further compounded the already existing uncertainty. (Iftikhar A. Khan, "['Technical' reasons for not giving poll date: official](#)," *Dawn*, 23 September 2023)

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### **ECP announced tentative dates for the elections to be last week of January 2024**

On 21 September, Election Commission of Pakistan declared that general elections would be held by the last week of January, more than two months after the constitutionally required limit of 90 days. The ECP's announcement did not specifically indicate the date of the elections, giving its schedule a degree of flexibility. This schedule is anticipated to be made public after the final notification of the delimitation procedure, which is scheduled to occur on 30 November. Dawn was informed by reliable sources that 28 January would likely be election day. The ECP also notified that on 27 September the preliminary delimitation list would be released. On 30 November, the final list would be made public after hearing any concerns or recommendations on the constituencies. A 54-day vote schedule would then be issued. (Iftikhar A. Khan, "[Country told to prepare for chilly elections in January](#)," *Dawn*, 22 September 2023)

### **Bilawal demands “Level Playing Field” from PML-N**

On 19 September, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari stated that the party’s demand for a “level playing field” is directed at the PML-N, its erstwhile ally. He stated: “We have empowered President Zardari to address the complaint and he must be given time for this purpose.” Zardari emphasised that PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari has been empowered to address this complaint. He also commented on the Election Commission’s alleged discrimination regarding development projects, highlighting that it has a “moral, legal and constitutional obligation” to ensure consistency in treatment across provinces. (Amjad Mahmood, “Bilawal blames PML-N for lop-sidedness of election arena,” Dawn, 20 September 2023; Faizan Bangash, “[Level playing field concern related to PMLN: Bilawal](#),” *The News International*, 20 September 2023)

### **Preliminary delimitation for Pakistan’s general election to be completed by 26 September**

On 19 September, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) announced that the preliminary delimitation of constituencies for the upcoming general election is expected to be completed by 26 September; the preliminary delimitation lists will be published on 27 September. This development indicates a possible general election in the last week of January, as the ECP has shortened the delimitation timeline. Additionally, the ECP has implemented a new monitoring control system to improve data collection. These systems, which are to be linked to provincial and district-level control rooms, will operate before and after the election to ensure transparency. (Mumtaz Alvi, “[ECP to finish preliminary delimitations by 26th](#),” *The News International*, 19 September 2023; Iftikhar A Khan, “[Initial delimitation may be ready later this month: ECP](#),” *Dawn*, 19 September 2023)

## **SECURITY**



Source: AFP

### **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa military operation: One soldier and terrorist ringleader dead**

On 29 September, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, security forces engaged in gunfire with a terrorist reported by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). According to the press release, separate military operations in the Kurram and Mardan districts of KP resulted in the death of a soldier and of a wanted terrorist. A “high-value target, terrorist ringleader Faisal” was killed as a result of an intelligence-based operation that was carried out in the Katlang general area of the Mardan district. He was “highly wanted by law enforcement agencies,” according to the ISPR, and he was actively involved in several terrorist actions. It said that he had also had guns and explosives found on him. (Iftikhar Shirazi, “[Soldier martyred, terrorist ringleader killed in 2 KP military engagements: ISPR](#),” *Dawn*, 29 September 2023)

### **'Twin bombings' targeting a mosque in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

On 29 September, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Interim Information Minister Feroze Jamal informed that, two suicide bombers struck a mosque inside the walls of the Doaba police station in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Hangu, causing at least five deaths and twelve injuries. He said one of the assailants was killed in a gunfight with the police outside the mosque, while the other one was able to enter the place of worship. Jamal continued by mentioning that during gun fire exchange, two police officers were also injured. He also said that because of the police’s quick response, worshipers were able to flee the area when they heard gunfire. Lieutenant General Hassan Azhar Hayat, commander of the Peshawar Corps, lauded the officers for their efforts and acknowledged that they had helped to prevent serious damage. Shehbaz Sharif also expressed his condolences over the deaths caused, stating that such attacks on the holy day demonstrated “the malign intentions of terrorists.” (Javid Hussain and Arif Hayat, “[At least 5 killed, 12 wounded in ‘twin blasts’ targeting mosque inside police station in KP’s Hangu](#),” *Dawn*, 29 September 2023)

### **Suicide blast near a procession in Balochistan’s Mastung district**

On 29 September, a suspected suicide bomber detonated himself near a procession honouring Eid Miladun Nabi (PBUH) in Balochistan’s Mastung province, killing at least 52 individuals, among them a senior police official. District Health Officer (DHO) Abdul Rasheed Shahi and City Station House Officer (SHO) Mohammad Javed Lehri both told Dawn that there had been casualties, and Lehri added that a police official was among the deceased. Dr. Saeed Mirwani, the President and CEO of Shaheed Nawab Ghaus Bakhsh Raisani Memorial Hospital, had earlier informed Dawn that



34 people had died and more than 130 had been injured. Following the bombing in Mastung, the Karachi Police announced that they will continue to be "completely on high alert" per the orders of Additional Inspector General Khadim Husain Rind. To protect Eid Miladun Nabi festivities and processions throughout the city, the senior police officer directed the force to tighten security measures. Following the explosion, condolences flooded in quickly. Murtaza Solangi, the interim minister of information, declared that "cowardly acts of terror cannot lower the morale of the country." (Abdullah Zehri, "[At least 52 killed, scores injured in suicide blast near 12th Rabiul Awwal procession in Mastung: official](#)," *Dawn*, 29 September 2023; Syed Ali Shah "[At least 50 killed, scores injured in blast near Eid Miladun Nabi procession in Mastung](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 23 September 2023)

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### **Car bomb attack defused in Quetta**

On 28 September, Quetta police defused an attempt to carry bomb attack as the law enforcement were tipped about a suspected car presence in the parking area of a police station in Eastern Bypass. The report informed that over 35 kilograms of explosives were found and they also recovered arms and ammunition from the car as they took the suspect to custody. (Saleem Shahid, "[Car-bomb plot foiled in Quetta](#)," *Dawn*, 28 September 2023)

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### **Pakhtunkhwa Apex Committee decided to further up the campaign against militants**

On 28 September, the Interim Information Minister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel told Dawn that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Apex Committee, a forum of civil and military officials, has decided that the offensive against militants in the province will be expedited. According to the minister, the apex committee agreed to prohibit the sale of night vision devices in order to stop militants from using them in assaults on law enforcement. Mr. Kakakhel responded that no nation permitted unregistered individuals on its territory when asked about Afghan nationals residing there without documentation in general and KP in particular. He declared that the federal government would never let illegal immigrants live in the country. As stated by him, there were 13 organizations involved in extortion cases, and law enforcement agencies reported 145 such crimes and detained 174 suspects. (Umer Farooq, "[Apex body decides to expedite offensive against militants in KP](#)," *Dawn*, 29 September 2023)

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### **COAS on actions against "spectrum of illegal activities"**

On 28 September, General Asim Munir, the Chief of Army Staff, committed to continue combating a "spectrum of illegal activities" with "full force" with the aim to save Pakistan from "substantial economic losses." These remarks were made by the army chief during a meeting of the Punjab Provincial Apex Committee. He emphasized the necessity of collaboration amongst all pertinent departments for the successful outcomes of the historic efforts. The COAS was briefed about the overall security situation, including actions against electricity and gas theft, hoarding, and foreign currency smuggling, according to a statement released by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR). (Iftikhar Shirazi, "[Actions against 'spectrum of illegal activities' to continue to rid Pakistan of economic losses: COAS](#)," *Dawn*, 29 September 2023)

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### **TLP threatens to demolish Ahmadiyya worship place minarets in Daska**

On 21 September, tension rose in Daska as the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) threatened to destroy the minarets of a historic Ahmadiyya worship place. The place, built by Sir Zafarullah Khan before Partition, is located in old Daska city. TLP claimed that the minarets violated laws introduced in 1984 by General Ziaul Haq. The party filed a complaint with Daska police and urged its members to gather for a rally "to decide on the issue." In response to the issue, Sialkot's District Police Officer stated that "No one so far has demolished the minarets of the Ahmadi worship place at Daska." However, as per a spokesman for the Jamaat Ahmadiyya in Pakistan, there have been 5 attacks on Ahmadi worship places in recent months, despite Lahore High Court's recent order protecting such minarets. This has drawn concern from the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). (Asif Chaudhry, "[Pre-partition Ahmadi worship place threatened in Punjab's Daska](#)," *Dawn*, 22 September 2023)

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### **Eight terrorists killed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

On 21 September, eight terrorists were killed and five apprehended as a result of intelligence-based operations in Bannu and North Waziristan, conducted by security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In Bannu, an intense exchange of fire with a squad of 11 terrorists led to six terrorists being killed and five apprehended. These individuals were involved in multiple terrorist activities, including facilitating a suicide attack on a military convoy in Jani Khel on 31 August, 2023. Simultaneously in North Waziristan, forces

engaged two terrorists, and were able to successfully recover ammunition from them. Search and sanitization operations followed to neutralise any remaining terrorists. ("Weapons and ammunition were recovered from the terrorists while a search operation was launched in adjoining areas to apprehend any other terrorists or facilitators," *The Friday Times*, 22 September 2023)

### **ISPR: Operation in Dera Ismail Khan kills one militant**

On 20 September, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) informed that during an operation in the Kulachi area of Dera Ismail Khan, one militant was killed and another was injured. They found ammunition and weaponry from the militant's base. The statement said: "Locals of the area appreciated the operation. Sanitisation of the area is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area." (Irfan Mughal, "One militant killed in D.I. Khan operation: ISPR," *Dawn*, 21 September 2023)

## **ECONOMY**



Source: GCC

### **Pakistan and GCC sign a tentative trade agreement**

On 29 September, Ministry of Commerce of Pakistan reported that Pakistan and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) signed a preliminary free trade agreement (FTA) after concluding the final round of discussions in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The joint statement was signed between the GCC Secretary General Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi and Interim Commerce Minister Gohar Ejaz. In the statement, "Both parties looked forward to the swift execution, ratification, and implementation of the agreement, which will mark a new chapter in the economic relations between our parties." According to the Saudi Press Agency, the GCC secretary general stated that the preliminary agreement was a "recognition of the importance of strengthening trade relations and economic cooperation with countries and international blocs". He stated, that the "historic economic agreement" marked an "important transforming point" in the two parties' collaboration and would advance advancement and prosperity while serving the

common interests of both parties, as it emphasizes the vital significance of close partnership between countries to strengthen economic performance relations. ("Pakistan inks preliminary deal on free trade agreement with Gulf Cooperation Council," *Dawn*, 29 September 2023)

### **PIA suffered PKR 60.71 billion in loss**

On 27 September, the national flag carrier report on Pakistan International Airlines found that aviation had suffered a loss of PKR 60.71 billion within the past 6 months. The total revenue that was generated by PIA stands at PKR 120.27 billion. The report stated that the operational cost of the airline rose by 41 per cent owing to a hike in fuel and oil prices. Interim Privatization Minister Fawad Hassan announced that the flagship airline will not be grounded and that no employee of PIA will be sacked owing to the company's loss. ("PIA suffers Rs60.71b loss in 2023 1st half," *The Express Tribune*, 27 September 2023)

### **PM Kakar's priority to stabilize Pakistan's economy**

On 26 September, Interim Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar in an interview with TRT World expressed that fixing Pakistan's economy is of paramount importance and priority during his tenure. He expressed his plans to slash government expenditure and hike revenue. He said: "The economy is extremely pressing right now and these are the problems which are hitting a common man very hard," and the bailout loan by the International Monetary Fund is an opportunity for the country to reconsider their economic behaviour. Kakar expressed his confidence that during his short tenure, they will establish a mandate for the future stability of the economy and deliver to the people. ("Fixing economy top priority: PM," *Business Recorder*, 27 September 2023)

### **Exponential rise in Pakistan inflows**

On 26 September, based on a report published by the Foreign Economic Assistance (FEA), the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) said that Pakistan secured USD 5.41 billion in inflows within FY2023 from July to August. This came as an exponential rise compared to the USD 493 million from last year. This comes in addition to the USD 1.2 billion provided by the International Monetary Fund as part of their 3 billion stand-by agreement. The estimated amount for foreign assistance stands at USD 17.62 billion and from the USD 3.206 billion in inflows USD 2.45 billion were for loans and budgetary support. (Khaleeq

Kiani, "[Pakistan secures \\$5.4bn inflows over two months](#)," *Dawn*, 27 September 2023)

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### **Orga warned against speculation over petroleum prices**

On 25 September, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority refuted the worries that the hike in petroleum prices could disrupt the supply chain. Orga inferred that the prices were based on the value of international markets and the exchange rate. While the exchange rate has improved slightly Orga warned against any speculations of price increase or decrease in the period. The price movement could shift either way in the coming days. (Khaleeq Kiani, "[Ogra cautions against 'jumping the gun' on petroleum prices](#)," *Dawn*, 26 September 2023)

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### **CDWP approves USD 150 million energy capability loan**

On 25 September, the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) approved development schemes authorizing the acquisition of a USD 150 million World Bank programme aimed at energy efficiency and conservation, the package also includes a loan of USD 135 million. Pakistan is estimated to pay two per cent interest on the loan and the additional grant of USD 15 million. The loan is allocated to the Ministry of Science and Technology where the project aims to change the existing buildings to energy-efficient ones, shifting from gas dependency to electricity and on capacity building officers. (Shahbaz Rana, "[\\$150m 'energy efficiency' loan okayed](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 26 September 2023)

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### **Caretaker finance minister highlights factors behind state-owned enterprises' losses**

On 21 September, Caretaker Finance Minister Dr Shamshad Akhtar addressed the issues contributing to the losses of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in Pakistan estimated to be PKR 500 billion. Factors such as external interference, lack of accountability, weak management, and limited accountability were the reasons behind the losses. Akhtar emphasised the government's efforts to finalize a policy framework and design for SOEs, with some institutions continuing the privatisation process. Furthermore, Akhtar held discussions on the vitality of enhancing the governance and performance of SEOs, to lessen their financial burden on public resources. Additionally, she mentioned the establishment of strategic and non-strategic SOEs and the nomination of independent directors as part of the SOEs Act, 2023. (Zaheer Abbasi, "[Shamshad lists factors behind SOEs'](#)

[Rs500bn losses](#)," *Business Recorder*, 22 September 2023)

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### **Pakistan anticipates high inflation, report by Asian Development Bank**

On 21 September, The Asia Development Outlook, a flagship publication of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) released a report stating that Pakistan's economy stands out as an outlier in Asia and the country will have the highest inflation rate. The report pointed out that Pakistan has the lowest economic growth rate and has gradually increased the inflation estimation to 25 per cent for the current fiscal year. The report predicts further increases in interest rates and urges for a fiscal consolidation plan that encompasses restricted spending on defence and energy subsidies. The report also states that the currencies of developing economies in Asia have marginally depreciated, and Pakistan's currency has seen a steep devaluation of 30 per cent. (Shahbaz Rana, "[Pakistan to face highest inflation](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 21 September 2023)

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### **UAE bans meat imports from Pakistan**

On 21 September, UAE banned meat import from Pakistan via sea as fungus was found in a consignment of meat. The whole shipment of the meat consignment which was sent by a Karachi-based company was destroyed by the UAE authorities. The ban was imposed on all the upcoming imports of frozen meat from Pakistan through sea till 10 October. Despite the ban, meat exports by air will progress without any break. It is to be noted that Pakistan exports about USD 144 million worth of meat per year to the UAE. The Pakistani meat exporters stated that it is not a ban but rather an embargo laid by the UAE, and will adhere to the protocol henceforth. ("[UAE bans meat imports from Pakistan via sea](#)," *Dawn*, 21 September 2023)

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### **"PIA is Exhibit A for why the government has no business to be in business," an editorial in The News International**

On 21 September, an editorial in *The News International* "Privatizing PIA," sounded the ongoing debate over the privatization of Pakistan International Airline (PIA). PIA in a mammoth amount of debt sought to gather a bailout package of PKR25 billion, denied as the authorities were working towards the privatization plans. The op-ed stated that several believed that it was not the time for privatization with the author extrapolating that the best time was decades ago. Furthermore, the writer stresses that PIA is the best example as to why "government has no business in Business."



The competitive nature and the fear of failure in corporate kept the companies in check, and with the government's support, PIA became immune to the pressure. The airline became an agency of personal interest with overpaid salaries and perks disregarding aviation's revenue. The mismanagement and the lethargic state of improvement brought PIA to where it is now with the interim government establishing a timeline for privatizing. ("Privatizing PIA," *The News International*, 21 September 2023)

### **Distribution Companies (DisCos) seek PKR 1.829 per unit hike in fuel cost**

On 20 September, *The News International* reported that the ex-Wapda Distribution Companies (Discos) in Pakistan have requested an additional PKR 1.829 per unit in fuel cost adjustment (FCA), aiming to collect an extra PKR 30 billion from consumers in the upcoming month. Despite over 74 per cent of power generation coming from local cheaper fuels like hydro, coal, gas, nuclear, wind, solar, and bagasse, the request for an FCA increase comes after a nearly 26 per cent increase in the annual base tariff and about 18 per cent quarterly adjustments. The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) has accepted the petition, with public hearings scheduled for 27 September to assess the tariff increase's justification. (Khaleeq Kiani, "Discos set to squeeze Rs30bn more from users," *Dawn*, 20 September 2023; Isar Khan, "Discos seek Nepra nod for Rs1.829/unit hike," *The News International*, 20 September 2023)

### **Pakistan's power sector circular debt reaches PKR 2.31 trillion**

On 20 September, *Dawn* reported that Pakistan's power sector circular debt for the fiscal year 2022-23 has reached PKR 2.31 trillion, marking an increase of PKR 57 billion compared to the previous fiscal year. Despite efforts to raise power tariffs and address sector inefficiencies in line with IMF directives, the circular debt has continued to rise. Although there was a decrease of PKR 336 billion from its peak in July 2023, underlying structural issues in the power sector persist, burdening consumers with significant financial costs. Payables to power producers and fuel suppliers have also increased, contributing to the mounting debt. The resolution of disputes, such as the one with K-Electric, is crucial to stabilizing the sector's financial health. ("Circular debt hits Rs2.31tr," *The News International*, 20 September 2023)

### **Pakistan seeks Russian oil imports at a lower cost**

On 19 September, *The News International* reported that Pakistan is seeking to import Russian oil at USD 60 per barrel according to the limit set by the Group of Seven (G7) nations, as informed by an anonymous official from the Ministry of Energy. According to the official, the decision to import Russian crude on a monthly basis was made after Pakistan Refinery Limited (PRL)'s trial shipment of 100,000 tonnes of URAL crude was evaluated. He apprised, that out of the URAL crude, PRL produced 10 per cent gasoline, 60 per cent furnace oil, 10 to 15 per cent diesel, and the remaining 15 per cent miscellaneous goods. At a loss of 25 per cent of the price of Brent crude, the PRL was forced to export furnace oil. He also stated: "Moscow has indicated that Russia will purchase the furnace oil from Pakistan, but the price has not yet been determined". He further reiterated that Pakistan had also requested superior crudes from Russia, such as SOKOL or Siberian Light Oil, which are more expensive than URAL on the world market. The decision to supply SOKOL, or Siberian light oil, at a steep discount of USD 35 a barrel is up to the Russian government. (Khalid Mustafa, "Pakistan pursues Russian oil imports at G7 price cap, wants better crudes," *The News International*, 20 September 2023)

### **"Has the IMF truly enabled the expansion and balanced growth of international trade?" asks an opinion**

On 19 September, in an opinion in *The News International*, Dr Murtaza Khuhro discussed the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) association with a global economic model characterised by inequality. He stated that while advocates argue that some degree of inequality is necessary for incentives, critics contend that this model perpetuates disparities and fails to prioritise inclusiveness. The IMF, with its macroeconomic focus, often offers "one-size-fits-all" solutions that address "surface symptoms," thereby neglecting the unique socio-economic challenges of individual countries. To address this, Khuhro believes that the "digitisation of government processes or emphasized education and skill development for young professionals" should be prioritised by the organisation. This would unlock the potential of human intellect, ultimately leading to balanced global growth. Thus, while the writer acknowledged the commandability of the IMF's intentions, he underlined that "its focus and methodology remain the subject of intense debate and scrutiny." (Dr Murtaza Khuhro, "Beyond macroeconomics," *The News International*, 19 September 2023)

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### Immediate and long-term measures to address Pakistan's gas price challenges

On 19 September, Dawn reported that the caretaker government in Pakistan is facing challenges related to gas pricing and circular debt in the energy sector. To address these issues, immediate steps include increasing cash payments to urban recipients of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), allocating funds for winter gas in Balochistan and making cash and non-cash book adjustments among energy entities. In the long term, structural changes like separating the transmission network from existing gas companies, moving towards a weighted average cost for gas, and enhancing oil and gas production are needed. Balancing the impact of gas price hikes on low-income consumers, especially in Balochistan, is a key concern. The government aims to protect vulnerable consumers through subsidies and targeted tariff adjustments. (Khaleeq Kiani, [“IMF pressure spurs prompt actions in gas sector,” Dawn](#), 19 September 2023)

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### EXTERNAL



Source: Reuters

### Bill to halt US defence funding to Pakistan voted out

On 2 October, Dawn reported on the “Move against fund to Pakistan foiled in US Congress,” where the previous month Tennessee Republican Andy Ogles submitted a proposal suggesting an amendment to the US Appropriation bill, by halting defence assistance to Pakistan. The proposal was voted out with a clear majority of 298 voting against it and 132 in favour.

The congresswomen against the bill argued that the move was “misguided” and that the two countries have a multifaceted relationship rooted in shared democratic values, said Sheila Jackson Lee. Congresswoman Barbara Lee said: “essential to maintain stability in the region, address extremism and promote peace and security.” (Anwar Iqbal, [“Move against fund to Pakistan foiled in US Congress,” Dawn](#), 2 October 2023)

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### Pakistan satellite to be carried in China's 'Change-6' Lunar mission

On 2 October, *The Friday Times* reported that China's “Change-6” Lunar mission will take Pakistan's satellite to the moon with other countries like the European Space Agency, France and Italy. The mission is set to launch by the early half of 2024. French testing tools investigating radioactive gas, Italy's Valle Brett Radar System, ESA's Negative Ion Detector and Pakistan's CubeSat satellite will be sent to lunar orbit. The Chang'e-6 mission aims to reach the dark side of the moon and gather samples for earth. ([“China's 'Change-6' Lunar Mission To Carry Pakistani Satellite To Moon In 2024,” The Friday Times](#), 2 October 2023)

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### World Bank report ranks Pakistan as the top borrower in 2023

On 2 October, a World Bank Report titled “World Bank Annual Report 2023-A New Era in Development,” found that Pakistan was the top borrower of the International Development Association (IDA) with the estimated funded reckoned to be USD 2.3 billion. The project aided with rehabilitation efforts of USD 1.7 billion in the worst-hit areas of Sindh, they funded the restoration of crops, health services and local response capacity. IDA is a major multilateral source of financing, offering development loans, grants and grantees to the poorest countries. Furthermore, they provided expert advice on debt management, measures for job creation and climate change. (Amin Ahmed, [“Pakistan emerges as top International Development Association borrower in 2023,” Dawn](#), 2 October 2023)

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### Pakistan congratulate China on their 74th National Day

On 1 October, Interim Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar congratulated Chinese President Xi Jinping on China's 74th National Day. He felicitated their friendship as “Iron Brotherhood” and called Beijing: “In today's world, an anchor of peace & stability as well as the engine of development & progress. Long live Pak-China friendship.” Interim Chief Minister of Balochistan Murtaza Solangi also wished China and called the economic success of Beijing an example for all developing nations. (Syed Irfan Raza, [“Pakistan takes great pride in China's progress, says PM Kakar,” Dawn](#), 2 October 2023)

### **Government seeks USD 11 billion in aid from China and Saudi Arabia**

On 28 September, caretaker Finance Minister Dr. Shamshad Akhtar preceding the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue, chaired by Senator Saleem Mandviwalla in Islamabad, expressed that Pakistan is looking for about USD11 billion in bilateral support from China and Saudi Arabia as the caretakers push for effectively extending the tax net to retail, agricultural, and real estate sectors while continuing a crackdown on illegal currency movements to fill external and domestic resource shortages. Akhtar also discussed the IMF need that the Benazir Income Support Programme be partially transferred to the provinces. She bemoaned the fact that exporters continued to ask for subsidies despite the economic downturn and categorically rejected the idea of such handouts. (Khaleeq Kiani, "Govt eyes \$11bn aid from China, Saudi Arabia amid crunch," *Dawn*, 29 September 2023)

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### **Pakistan and Iran engage to further border trade and safety**

On 28 September, the Pakistan- Iran Joint Border Trade Committee engaged in discussions over border tensions, trade and immigration policy. The meeting was held in Mirjaveh close to the Iranian border where the meeting was headed by Chief Collector of Customs of Balochistan Abdul Qadir Memon with their Iranian counterpart the Director General of Transit and International Transport. They discussed the issue of cross-border movement, transportation of commodities and the need to further promote bilateral trade. There was a unanimous agreement to impose strict measures to curb illegal crossing or smuggling activities. (Saleem Shahid, "Pakistan, Iran advance border trade talks," *Dawn*, 29 September 2023)

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### **UN Secretary-General on delayed aid for the flood victims in Pakistan**

On 27 September, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed his concerns over the delayed pledged aid for Pakistan he stated that billions were promised mostly in loans but the country still awaits much of the funding. These delays are detrimental to the common who are unable to build their lives and the rehabilitation efforts. Guterres also proclaimed the idea of creating a "loss and damage" fund for developing countries that are severely affected by the risk of climate change. ("2022 Pakistan floods: Reconstruction aid lagging: UN chief," *Business Recorder*, 29 September 2023)

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### **Islamabad received LPG shipment from Moscow**

On 26 September, the first Russian liquified Petroleum Gas shipment reached Pakistan. The shipment is the second biggest energy transaction between the two countries and Iran supported the shipment process. Before this year Pakistan also received its first crude oil shipment from Russia as part of the bilateral deal. Moscow delivered 100,000 metric tons of LPG to Islamabad through Tehran's Sarakh's Special Economic Zone. Moscow embassy informed that the second shipment was under process but the value of the shipment was not disclosed except that Islamabad used Chinese currency to pay Moscow. ("Pakistan receives first shipment of Russian LPG, Russian embassy says," *Business Recorder*, 27 September 2023)

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### **Foreign Minister Jilani on recognizing Israel**

On 23 September, Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani stated that Pakistan's choice to recognize Israel will be determined by its national interests and with those of Palestinians. Jilani was reacting to Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen's statements that if his nation's arrangement with Saudi Arabia went through, six or seven Muslim nations would make peace with the Jewish state. Nevertheless, many think that any agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia would put pressure on other nations, particularly Pakistan, to reevaluate their views because Riyadh has long been the leading supporter of the Palestinian cause. Despite a historic meeting between the then-Pakistani and Israeli foreign ministers in Turkey in 2005, Islamabad has consistently refused calls to recognize Israel. However, the process was unable to proceed since there had always been significant opposition to maintaining diplomatic connections with Israel in the absence of a resolution to the Palestinian problem. ("FM links Israel ties to national, Palestinian interests," *The Express Tribune*, 25 September 2023)

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### **Pakistan's economy is on the verge of collapse, the World Bank warns**

On 22 September, the World Bank issued a warning to the incoming government ahead of the new election cycle to make early decisions while making it clear that international lenders and development partners could only offer advice with international experiences of success and some financing; however, that difficult decisions and course corrections could only be made within the country. The positive aspect is that nations with higher rates of profitable growth, including



Vietnam, Indonesia, and India, also made the right choices during the crisis and were able to overcome comparable obstacles. Najy Benhassine, Country Director for the World Bank in Pakistan, stated during a news briefing that "this may be Pakistan's moment in making policy shifts." He also stated that "strong vested interests, including those of military, political, and business leaders, heavily influence policy decisions." According to another official from the World Bank, Pakistan's poverty rate for those living below the USD 3.20 per day middle-income level has decreased to 34.3 per cent by 2018 from 73.5 per cent two decades earlier. However, it has since risen to 39.4 per cent. Additionally, at USD 3.65 per day of income, over 12.5 million people had slipped below the poverty line. (Khaleeq Kiani, "Pakistan's economy on edge of precipice, warns World Bank," *Dawn*, 23 September 2023)

### **Iran and Pakistan gas pipeline set in motion**

On 22 September, the interim Federal Energy, Power, and Petroleum Minister Muhammad Ali said that the long-delayed, billions dollar Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline has begun construction. According to him, the nation's natural gas supplies have declined by 20 per cent since last year, and the administration would work to control load shedding over the winter. He added that the administration was attempting to bring the population the most respite possible by importing additional Russian oil, correcting the refinery problems, and other measures. Ali went on to say that even if the government had purchased gas at greater costs, it was still not possible for it to offer it to the public at lower prices. He also stated that the government was attempting to work with private refineries to supply the demand. "The people will have to use gas wisely," he continued while addressing the media after inaugurating the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited's (SNGPL) first Model Customer Service Centre in Lahore. ("Work on IP gas pipeline launched," *The Express Tribune*, 23 September 2023)

### **Pakistan's special representative for Afghanistan holds talks in Kabul to ease tensions**

On 21 September, Pakistan's special representative for Afghanistan, Ambassador Asif Durrani, made an unannounced trip to Kabul to hold talks with interim Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi and other officials. The visit aims to ease tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which have been strained due to continued cross-border terrorist attacks by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and the recent Torkham border closure. The Afghan foreign ministry stated: "Pakistan and

Afghanistan, as two neighbours and Islamic countries, should refrain from giving statements against each other, so it does not cause further tensions." The issue of Afghan refugees' detention and the revival of a scholarship program for Afghan students were also discussed, with Pakistan's envoy promising the revival of scholarships for Afghan students. (Kamrani Yousaf, "Pak envoy meets Afghan FM in Kabul," *The Express Tribune*, 22 September 2023)

### **Pakistan rejects claims of selling arms to Ukraine for IMF bailout**

On 19 September, Pakistan's Foreign Office (FO) strongly refuted a report by The Intercept, "US helped Pakistan get IMF bailout with secret arms deal for Ukraine, leaked documents reveal," alleging that Pakistan sold arms and ammunition to Ukraine as part of a deal to secure an IMF bailout package. The report, which claimed that the arms sales facilitated the bailout, was described as "baseless and fabricated" by the FO spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch. She further mentioned that Pakistan has maintained "strict neutrality" throughout the conflict, and has not provided arms or ammunition to either side. The IMF bailout program was negotiated "to implement difficult but essential economic reforms," and Baloch highlighted that this should not be misrepresented. Ukrainian officials have also denied reports of arms deals with Pakistan. ("FO rejects report linking IMF deal with arms for Ukraine," *Dawn*, 19 September 2023)

### **CHINA AND CPEC**



Source: Reuters

### **China and Pakistan relations**

On 26 September, an editorial in *The Express Tribune* "CPEC expansion plan in doldrums," on the state of China and Pakistan's economic ties as China did not agree to further their bilateral cooperation in areas of energy and water management. The op-ed expressed that Islamabad left its opposition to set up a coal-powered plant in Gwadar and that China refuses to agree to measures proposed by Pakistan. The negotiations signed upon largely exclude provisions proposed by Pakistan like the issue of financial challenges faced

by power companies. They also advised that the imported fuel-based Gwadar plant converts to Thar coal. The Planning Ministry called the ratification of the 11th JCC meeting a testament to their strong cooperation. (Shahbaz Rana, "[CPEC expansion plan in doldrums](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 26 September 2023)

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reasons where a large portion of the population live in remote regions, solar power is the pragmatic solution. Ullah said: "Pakistan's energy future must be one that not only addresses immediate challenges but also foresees a sustainable, green, and economically vibrant path forward." (Sana Ullah, "[Can Solar Power Fix Pakistan's Energy Crisis?](#)," *The Friday Times*, 21 September 2023)

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## ENERGY/ENVIRONMENT



Source: *The News International*

### **Air Quality Index ranks Karachi as the "most polluted city"**

On 26 September, the Air Quality Index by IQAir ranked Karachi became the most polluted city in the world for two consecutive days, they were followed by New Delhi. The particular matter used to judge the air quality rose by 20.3 times as per the World Health Organization standards. The recorded AQI was at 175 which is considered detrimental to individuals health and well-being. It is reckoned that Karachi's air quality has over the years and the current ranking showcases that there is no improvement but a further decline in the air quality. (Wara Khan, "[Karachi 'most polluted city' for second day](#)," *Dawn*, 27 September 2023)

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### **Pakistan's energy future towards renewable energy**

On 21 September, an editorial in *The Friday Times* "Can Solar Power Fix Pakistan's Energy Crisis?" by Sana Ullah sought to look into the future of Pakistan's energy needs and challenges. Ullah points out that with the country facing exorbitant electricity costs and unrelenting inflationary prices, Pakistan needs to invest in Renewable sources of energy. The writer states that Solar energy that is in abundance has been never profited from. Miriam Katz's "The Feasibility of Renewable Energy in Pakistan," informs that if only 0.25 per cent area in Balochsitan at 20 per cent efficiency were used for solar power generation, it would provide enough electricity for the whole country. Additionally, investing in solar energy is beneficial for several

## JUDICIARY



Source: *Dawn*

### **Justice Qazi Faez Isa meets Bar Council and Bar Association to tackle case backlog**

On 20 September, Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa is scheduled to meet with representatives from the Pakistan Bar Council and the Supreme Court Bar Association to discuss how to address the backlog of the 57,000 pending cases in the Supreme Court. The meeting will focus on various issues, including the timely administration of justice and hearing of cases. PBC Vice Chairman Rashid stated that "The political cases could be disposed of in a couple of hearings as the apex court has to interpret the question of law," and has expressed hope that this meeting would mean that the apex court becomes more efficient. Additionally, the meeting will also explore ways to streamline the court's operations for more efficient case disposal. (Malik Asad, "[CJP Isa meets lawyers today for strategy to clear backlog](#)," *Dawn*, 20 September 2023; "[CJP Qazi Faez Isa consults top lawyers today on early disposal of cases](#)," *The News International*, 20 September 2023)

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### **Expectations are high on Justice Isa, argues an analysis in Dawn**

On 20 September, in an editorial in *Dawn* titled "Great expectations," Zahid Hussain highlighted how Pakistani Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa has initiated the live-streaming of full court hearings on important constitutional matters, marking a historic step towards transparency in the judiciary. Hussain has marked this as a "new beginning" that "has lifted the veil over apex court hearings," as it

allows the public to watch proceedings and holds judges accountable while removing the shroud of secrecy from apex court cases. Isa's primary challenge, however, is to restore public trust in the judiciary, which has been tainted by "political partisanship and judicial populism." Hussain also highlighted how Isa faces expectations to address issues like "political prisoners being tried by military courts" and the "draconian" Official Secrets Act. This makes him a key guardian of democracy against the "creeping authoritarianism and violation of human rights in the country." (Zahid Hussain, "[Great expectations](#)," *Dawn*, 20 September 2023)

## SOCIETY



Source: *India Today*

### **Eight dead after a rocket launcher detonated in Sindh**

On 27 September, a rocket launcher shell detonated inside a house in Sindh's Kandhkot area killing eight people out of which four were children and injuring three more. The investigation found that the children found the rocket shell while playing and brought it home where it exploded. The Senior Superintendent of Police Rohail Khoso informed that the deceased and the injured were immediately taken to hospital. Sindh Chief Minister Justice Maqbool Baqar demanded a report by the provincial inspector general as to how the rocket launcher reached there, and whether was it a case of weapon smuggling to the Kutch areas. This has been an ongoing unfortunate incident where earlier this year a shepherd was the victim of a grenade blast on the outskirts of Chaman, after finding the grenade and playing with it. (Imtiaz Ali, Qurban Ali Khushik, "[8 dead, including 4 children, after rocket launcher shell explodes in Sindh's Kandhkot tehsil](#)," *Dawn*, 27 September 2023)

### **COAS applauds the Christian community's effort in national development**

On 25 September, Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir met with a thirteen-member delegation of the Christian community headed by the Church of Pakistan Bishop of Raiwand Dr. Azad Marshall. Inter-Services Public Relations applauded the measures taken by the Christian community and for their contribution to national development especially in the fields of education, healthcare and philanthropy. The meeting comes after the recent vandalism of a church in Pakistan and COAS expressed the need to further interfaith cooperation and harmony in Pakistan. He stressed that Islam is a religion that preaches peace and has no room for extremism and said: "No one can be allowed to take the law into their own hands in a civilized society." ("[COAS commends Christian community's contribution to national development](#)," *The Express Tribune*, 25 September 2023)

### **Polio samples from Pishin and Peshawar traced back to Afghanistan**

On 20 September, the Pakistan Polio Laboratory at the National Institute of Health (NIH) informed that the two wild poliovirus samples taken from the Pishin and Peshawar have been traced back to the Afghan strain of the virus. The sample from the Nangarhar, Pishin was traced back to Kandahar, Afghanistan. Federal Minister of Health Dr Nadeem Jan stated that the presence of the poliovirus on any side of the border is threatening to all children everywhere and that all parents should make sure that their kids are vaccinated. (Ikram Junaidi, "[Samples from Pishin, Peshawar test positive for poliovirus](#)," *Dawn*, 21 September)





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We are hoping to build this initiative into a credible independent global portal with independent research and analysis on contemporary Pakistan in a real-time basis. In the process, we are also looking forward to building capacity amongst young scholars who would want to work on Pakistan.



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*Editor: D. Suba Chandran*

*Editorial Team: Femy Francis, Dhriti Mukherjee, and Shamini Velayutham*

NIAS Programme on Science, Technology, and International Relations (STIR) School of Conflict and Security Studies, NIAS, IISc Campus, Bangalore, India

**Email to Prof D. Suba Chandran: [subachandran@nias.res.in](mailto:subachandran@nias.res.in)**

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